Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him), the Prophet of Mercy

"وما أرسلناك إلا رحمة للعالمين"

“And We have not sent you except as a mercy for the worlds.”
[Noble Qur’ān: *21:107*]

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All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and blessings and peace be upon Muhammad, seal of the prophets and messengers.

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"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astonishing results are the three criteria of a human genius, who could dare compare any great man in history with Muhammad?

"Philosopher, Orator, Apostle, Legislator, Conqueror of Ideas, Restorer of Rational beliefs...The founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?"

Alphonse de Lamartine in 'Histoire de la Turquie,' Paris, 1854.

“People, listen to me as I explain to you, for I do not know whether I will ever meet you again in this place after this year”, he said in a strong and clear voice. The crowd, over a hundred and twenty-four

thousand, stood in silence knowing that whatever was about to be said was of the utmost importance. The men were all dressed in two white garments, whilst the women were in their normal clothing. He continued talking, whilst sitting up straight on his camel. “Know that your blood, property and honour are as sacred as this day, this month and this city”.

It was mid-day and the sun was bright and hot. Yet the weather was the last thing on the minds of these righteous men and women. Their eyes were fixed on their leader and they were listening attentively to his words.

“You will certainly meet your Lord and He will certainly question you about what you do. Have I delivered my message?” He asked. They all unanimously replied “Yes”. “O God, bear witness,” he said, raising his forefinger skywards and then moving it towards the people.

As soon as he finished, the following verse was revealed to him:

“This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.” [Qur’ān: 5:3]

Finally, the mission was accomplished. A movement, which started a little over twenty years ago by one man, was now a full-fledged nation with thousands of followers. Within a few decades, it was to spread further and engulf three continents. In just a hundred years, it would become the largest empire ever seen, stretching from the Indus to the streets of Gibraltar. Within another hundred years, it would reach the doorsteps of China. The transforming power of his message was to produce a civilisation which contributed to all areas of human endeavour, in algebra, engineering, astronomy and medicine.

Even today, almost a quarter of the people of the earth have responded to the message of this man. People of all colours and ethnic backgrounds, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, all have been touched by the light, which was torched by this individual approximately fourteen hundred years ago.

How can a man of such modest beginnings, a man with such feeble means, a man with so few early followers, and a man in such a short space of time;

start a revolution which changed the face of human history forever?

Who is this man? He is Muhammad bin Abdullah (blessings and peace be upon him), the last Messenger of God. The greatest man in history and here is his story.

Birth of the Prophet

The Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was born on the ninth of the month Rabi' al-Awwal, in the year, 571 C.E, almost 600 years after Prophet Jesus, the son of Mary (peace be upon them both).

The Prophet's full name is Muhammad son of ‘Abdullah, son of ‘Abdul-Muttaleb, son of Hāshem. He was from the Banu Hāshem clan of the Quraysh tribe. His ancestry went all the way back to Prophet Ishmael and Prophet Abraham (peace be upon them both).

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) was born in the sacred city of Makkah, in the barren land of Arabia. Makkah was an important and prosperous city. Within it stood the Ka`bah, the

First House ever built for humanity, to worship the one true God, called Allah. The original Ka`bah was built by Prophet Abraham and his son, Prophet Ishmael, near the blessed spring of Zamzam. Over time, the people had abandoned the teachings of Prophet Abraham and Prophet Ishmael and had introduced a variety stone carved idols and wooden statues in the Ka`bah. At the time of the birth of the Prophet, the Ka`bah had 360 idols in it.

The Lone Orphan

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was an orphan. His father Abdullah passed away two months before he was born. When the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was born, his mother, Amenah bint Wahb, sent him to his grandfather, Abdul-Muttaleb, who was in the Ka`bah at the time. Abdul-Muttaleb was the chief of the Quraysh tribe and was esteemed by all. The grandfather was elated at the good news and gave the baby the name “Muhammad”, meaning “the praised one.”

It was the custom in Makkah for mothers to send their babies into the desert to be put in the care of

a desert tribe, where they grew up in the traditional healthy outdoor environment. Halimah As-Sa’deyyah took the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) home and nursed him. Having looked after so many children before, she noticed something extraordinary about the child. During Muhammad's stay with Halimah; she and her family received all kinds of blessings and favours from God.

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) returned to his mother after five years of desert life. When he was six years old his mother, Amenah passed away. As a young boy, he must have felt very sad and heart-broken at the loss of his mother. The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) then went to stay with his grandfather, Abdul-Muttaleb, who was extremely kind to him and looked after him with great love and affection.

After two more years, when the Messenger of God was eight years old, his grandfather also died. Thereafter, Abu Tāleb, an uncle of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) took him under his care.

Al-Amin (The Trustworthy)

As the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) grew up, he surpassed everyone in intelligence, modesty and truthfulness. He was known for moderation, honesty and a serious sense of responsibility. In his early youth, he was known to be a thoughtful boy. He worked as a shepherd and played with other children.

Even before he received his first revelation, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) believed in One God, the God of Ibrāhim (blessings and peace be upon him) and never fell into the common practices of his people of worshipping idols. He believed that there was only one God, and only He was truly worthy of worship. He never gambled nor did he drink alcohol. He did not engage in gossip and backbiting. He gave charity to the poor and looked after the needy. He never lied, never broke a promise and never bore false witness. Everyone respected him, and the people addressed him as “Al-Amin”, which means “the trustworthy one”. He was also known as “As-Sadeq” or “The Truthful” for he never told a lie.

The Pledge

Even before his Prophethood, the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) was concerned about his fellow men and stood up against injustice and inequality. The Messenger of God with some other fair minded men once met at the house of ‘Abdullah ibn Jud’ān and made a promise that they would unite and protect the rights of the weak and the needy. The Arabs called this agreement “*Hilf al-Fudoul*".

Twenty years after the beginning of his Prophethood, he said: “I was present at the house of Abdullah bin Jud’ān at the time of the pledge. I am not prepared to break my promise, even if I were to be given a hundred red camels. If somebody should appeal to me today, by virtue of that pledge, I would hasten to his help."

The Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) felt honoured for being able to participate in an alliance that was formed on the basis of establishing justice. He wanted to demonstrate that oppression and injustice is unacceptable, whether the person wronged is a

Muslim or Non-Muslim, whether black or white, rich or poor.

His Marriage to Khadijah

When the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) was twenty-five years old, he married Khadijah bint Khuwayled, an honourable Qurayshi woman of exceptional character. She was a successful businesswoman with fine intellect and great wealth. When Khadijah was informed about the Prophet's behaviour, truthfulness and outstanding ability, she expressed a wish to marry him.

Soon afterwards, Khadijah married the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) and the marriage proved a very successful one. Khadijah (may God be pleased with her) was the first woman that the Messenger of God married, and she bore him all his children except for Ibrahim.

Khadijah bore the Prophet four daughters: Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum and Fatimah and two sons: Al-Qasem and 'Abdullah who was also known as At-Tayyeb and At-Tāher.

Rebuilding the Ka`bah

When the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) was thirty-five years old, the Quraysh decided to rebuild the Ka`bah, after a sudden flood had shaken its foundations and cracked its walls. When the rebuilding had reached the stage where the Black Stone (*al-Hajar al-Aswad*) had to be put in its place, a dispute arose and they began to argue fiercely, each clan wanting the honour of carrying out the noble task of placing the stone.

The people were about to fight one another, when one of the elders suggested a solution: “Make the first person to enter the gate your judge”, he said. They all looked, and to their immense delight, Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) entered. “It is *Al-Amin*, the trustworthy one”, they cried, "We are content to follow his verdict." The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) saw what was happening and asked for a piece of cloth. He then took the Black Stone and placed it in the centre of the cloth. Thereafter, he told each clan leader to take a corner of the cloth and lift it together. They did this, bringing it to its position. He (blessings and peace be upon him) then put the

Black Stone in its place with his own hands. Thus, a bloody conflict was prevented and the dispute was resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

In the Cave of Heraa'

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) spent most of his time in contemplation and worship. He would often go to Cave Heraa', situated near the top of mount an-Nūr, approximately two miles outside Makkah. [(1)] He would stay there meditating and praying until his provision of food and water would finish. He would sit for lengthy periods pondering the mysteries of creation. What is man's true purpose in life? From where does man come, and where will he go after death? What does God Almighty require from us?

On the 21st of Ramadan, 610 C.E., when the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was 40 years old, the first verses of the Qur'ān were revealed to him. Whilst he was sitting all alone in the cave, out of the stillness of the night, the Angel Gabriel suddenly appeared and said to him,

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(1) Nowadays, in the north eastern part of Makkah.

“Read!”

“I cannot read”, Muhammad replied, shaken.

The angel repeated the command, pressing him on, “Read!”

The Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) once again protested, “I cannot read”.

“Read” the mighty voice commanded once more.

“I cannot read”, the Prophet replied.

The angel then squeezed the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) a third time and said:

"Read in the name of your Lord, who created.

Created man from a clinging substance.

Read, and your Lord is the most Generous.

Who taught by the pen.

Taught man what he did not know."

(Surah 96: verses 1 to 5)

"Cover Me, Cover Me"

The occurrence in the cave left the Prophet shocked and confused. He (blessings and peace be upon him) trembled in fear, traumatised by what he had seen and heard. He set off for his house immediately. On reaching home, the Prophet asked Khadijah to wrap him in blankets. When he calmed down, he related the whole story to her.

Khadijah knew the character and integrity of the Prophet better than anyone else, after all she was his wife. She was well aware of his honesty and balanced personality. At once she reassured him: "No! God would never disgrace you! You keep good ties with your relatives, you look after the weak, you help the poor and the needy, you entertain the

guests and suffer hardships, in the path of truthfulness."

Khadijah then suggested that they go and consult her wise elderly cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who was a Christian. Waraqah heard the whole account and then said: "I am sure the angel that descended on Moses, has descended on you. Your people will abuse and mistreat you. I wish I could be alive to give you my support when your people will turn you out."

"Will they turn me out?" The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) found this difficult to believe. Waraqah replied that the people have always turned against those who received a message from God.

Waraqah lived only a short period after this incident and passed away.

The Early Converts

The first to believe in the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) and his divine message was Khadijah, followed shortly afterwards by 'Ali bin Abi Tāleb (May God be pleased with him). Ali was ten

years old at the time and was living in the house of the Messenger of God. Zayd bin Harethah, a servant of the Messenger of God, also became a Muslim.

Among the men, Abu Bakr bin Abi Quhafah (May God be pleased with him), a close companion of the Prophet and a man known for his intellect and uprightness, also embraced Islam.

These people were the closest to the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) and daily witnessed his truthfulness, sincerity and good behaviour. It was only natural for them to be the first converts to Islam.

For the first three years, the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was told to spread the message privately, to evade any mischief from the Quraysh.

The Great Warner

The Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) kept his mission secret for three years. Then God commanded him to proclaim the message openly.

According to Arab custom, people used to climb a hill when they had to announce some important

news. So, the Prophet one day climbed up on a small hill called As-Safa, located near the Ka`bah. He called out to the people, who quickly gathered around him. He then addressed the people thus: “If I told you that a big army is hiding behind that mountain and is ready to attack you, would you believe me?” They all answered, “Of course, for we trust you. We know you always speak the truth.”

Then the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said: “God has commanded me to warn you, my people, that you should worship none but the one and only God. If you fail to do so, you will invite God’s anger. And I will not be able to do anything to help you, even though you are my own people.”

Sadly, his message fell on deaf ears, with many of the people leaving without caring to give any thought to the words of God's Messenger.

Rejection

There was one primary reason for the leaders of Quraysh to oppose the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him), and prevent him from spreading his message. Makkah was a centre of pilgrimage because of the Ka`bah, which housed

many idols of the neighbouring tribes. The leaders feared that if the concept of worshiping God alone became accepted, the tribes would stop visiting the idols and therefore have an adverse affect on the economy of the city and their monopoly of it.

After years of acknowledging Muhammad as the most kind and honest among them, the Quraysh started insulting him, ridiculing him and even calling him insane. Yet with all this abuse hurled upon him, he would never speak a bad word in return.

The Prophet was subjected to every kind of brutality and insult. Thorns were spread in his path and he was pelted with dirt and stones. Once, the Messenger of God went to pray near the Ka`bah. Some men from the Quraysh quickly surrounded him and attacked him all together. One of them took of his cloak and tried to strangle him. Abu Bakr (may God be pleased with him) quickly came to the rescue, shouting, “Would you kill a man just for saying, 'My Lord is Allah?'”

When persecution failed, the Quraysh tried other methods to stop the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) from preaching his message. Once,

‘Utbah bin Rabi’ah came to the Prophet with an offer which he thought was too enticing to be rejected. He said: “If you want money, we will collect some of our property and make you the richest among us. If you want honour, we will make you our chief so that every decision is yours. If you want kingdom, we will make you our king.”

When ‘Utbah had finished, the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) without any hesitation recited some verses from Surah Fussilat and refused the offer.

‘Utbah, dumfounded, went back to his companions and described what he heard of the amazing Qur’an. He said: “By God! I have heard words the like of which I have never heard before. By God! It is neither poetry nor magic. O men of Quraysh! Listen to me! Leave this man alone. Be kind towards him and don’t get in his way.”

Sadly, even the words of ‘Utbah had no influence on the Quraysh who bluntly refused to give heed to his advice.

Persecution

The Muslims were subjected to persecution. They were treated with contempt and mocked, but when that failed, the Quraysh turned to physical attacks and punishment. Every clan targeted those who had become Muslims among them. They began to imprison them and torture them with beatings, hunger and thirst.

Bilal, a black Abyssinian slave who had accepted Islam, was laid flat on his back in the midday heat. A huge stone was then placed on his chest. He was told by his persecutors to renounce Islam, but each time he would respond by saying, “God is One, God is One.”

The Banu Makhzum clan took ‘Ammar bin Yaser, his mother and father, who were all Muslims, into the midday heat. They tortured them and then left them exposed to the burning sun of Makkah. The Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) would pass by them and tell them to be patient. Finally, after much persecution, Ammar’s mother, Sumayyah was killed, her only crime being, her refusal to renounce Islam.

The Escape to Abyssinia

The Quraysh made life so difficult and unbearable for the Muslims in Makkah that the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) finally told some of the believers to migrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia). He suggested, "If you were to go to Abyssinia, you would find there a king who does not wrong anyone."

At first, a total of 15 men and women travelled to Abyssinia. Then the number increased to 83. This safe haven for the Muslims made the Makkans all the more furious. They sent two of their best envoys to the King of Abyssinia. The men presented expensive gifts to the King and told him to hand over the rebel Muslims. The Negus, King of Abyssinia, sent for the Muslims and asked them to explain themselves.

It was on this occasion that Ja'far, the son of Abu Tāleb, gave his memorable and magnificent speech. He said, "O King, we were a people of ignorance who worshipped idols, committed sins, treated neighbours badly, and the strong among us abused the weak. We were like that until God sent a Messenger to us. We knew his noble birth, his

honesty, trustworthiness and decency. He called us to proclaim the oneness of God and to worship Him alone. He commanded us to speak the truth, to be faithful, to keep good ties with our relatives, to be good to our neighbours and to refrain from crimes and bloodshed. He forbade us sinning, telling lies, taking property of orphans unjustly and insulting righteous women."

"For this reason alone our people have attacked us, tortured us and forced us from our religion…When they tortured us and came between us and our religion, we left for your country, choosing you, because we hoped we would be treated fairly, while we were with you."

The Negus listened to all of this attentively. Then he asked Ja'far to recite some of the noble Qur'an. Ja'far recited the beginning of Surah Maryam (The Chapter of Mary, the mother of Jesus).

After listening to the Qur'an, the King was so touched by it that he wept until his beard was wet. He said: "It seems as if these words and those which were revealed to Jesus are rays of light which radiated from the same source."

The Negus then turned to the two men from Quraysh and told them that he would never hand over the Muslims to them. He allowed the Muslims to live in his country in peace and treated them with honour. The Negus later on embraced Islam.

Umar and Hamza Embrace Islam

In the sixth year of Prophethood, the Prophet's uncle, Hamza, and Umar bin al-Khattab (may God be pleased with them both) embraced Islam. The Quraysh were greatly disturbed at the conversion of Hamza and Umar since both of them were known for their strength and courage.

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) had expressly prayed to God, asking Him to guide Umar to Islam. Once Umar embraced Islam, the Muslims gained confidence. Previously, they used to pray in secret, fearful of the disbelievers. However, when Umar became a Muslim; they began to pray openly in front of the Ka`bah.

Abdullah bin Mas'ud (may God be pleased with him), a famous companion of the Messenger of God used to say: "The Muslims were never able to pray near the Ka`bah until Umar embraced Islam". It was

for this reason that the Prophet gave Umar, the honourable title, “Al-Farooq”.

The Boycott

The number of Muslims was steadily increasing day by day. The Quraysh were so alarmed, they decided to exile the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) and his followers and force them to live in a confined section of the town. No provisions were allowed to be given to them, and the Muslims had to suffer long torturous periods without food and water.

The Quraysh wrote a document stating a boycott of the Prophet's clans, Banu Hashem and Banu al-Muttaleb. They declared that they would not marry the women of these clans or sell them any goods. They hung the parchment announcing the boycott on the Ka`bah.

The boycott was so strictly applied that the Muslims were forced to eat the leaves of trees. The hungry cries of small children could be heard all over the valley. The Muslims remained in this desperate state for three years, until the ban was finally lifted

and the document was miraculously destroyed by ants.

Even with such severe trials and conditions, the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) remained firm and continued calling the people to God night and day.

True Patience

Soon after the end of the boycott, in the tenth year of Prophethood, Abu Tāleb, the Prophet's supportive uncle and the Prophet's wife, Khadijah, both died. They had both been valuable companions noted for their loyalty, support and dedication. Throughout the years, Abu Tāleb, though not accepting Islam, was always there as an external supporter, protecting the Prophet from attacks of the Quraysh. At the same time, Khadijah was always there as personal support, comforting and encouraging the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) during all his hardships.

Now that they had both died, the Prophet experienced great grief and sadness. Yet, despite these losses, he never gave up. He persevered on

course, patiently inviting people to Islam, not minding the hardships he had to face for the cause of God.

The Journey to Ta'if

After Abu Taleb's death, the Messenger of God suffered more than before. He was now without protection and open to attack and maltreatment.

When abuse at the hands of Quraysh became unbearable, the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) decided to go to Ta'if, a city about 45 miles from Makkah, to call the people to Islam. He first went to the leaders of Ta'if, but contrary to his expectation, they were very discourteous to him and refused to accept his message. They even incited a street mob to shout abuse at the Prophet and pelt him with stones. The pelting continued for approximately three miles making the Prophet's body flow with blood.

Even after such adversity, when the angels came to ask permission of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) to crush the people of the city, he refused out of mercy, hoping that one day their children would embrace Islam.

The Miraculous Night Journey

On one very special night, the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) was taken by the angel Gabriel from al-Masjed al-Haram in Makkah to al-Masjed al-Aqsa in Jerusalem. From there he ascended into the heavens. During this journey he saw many great signs of God and met many of His prophets, including Adam, Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist and Jesus the Messiah (peace be upon them all).

During this night, God first made fifty prayers obligatory on Muslims each day. The Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) kept asking God to reduce the number of prayers until He reduced it to five prayers daily. Out of His mercy, God declared that whoever performs their five prayers daily with sincerity, would have the reward of fifty prayers.

The next morning, the Prophet told the Quraysh what had happened. As expected, they did not believe him and rather took the opportunity to ridicule him. To further convince and persuade them the Prophet gave them a detailed description of Jerusalem, a city he had never visited before. He

even gave information of a caravan that he had seen on the way back to Makkah. Yet none of these descriptions were sufficient proofs for the disbelieving Quraysh.

The Delegation

In the eleventh year of Prophethood, while the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) was at Aqabah, he met a group of men from Madinah (at that time known as Yathreb) and invited them to Islam. They were neighbours of the Jews and had heard mention of a Prophet, who was about to come. After some deliberation they accepted his teachings and became Muslims.

The following year, twelve people from Madinah met the Messenger of God and gave him their pledge that they would believe in one God and worship Him alone. They also pledged that they would not steal or kill their children. This undertaking is known as the First Pledge of Aqabah.

The Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) sent Mus'āb bin Umayr with them. Mus'āb was a handsome young man who was a proficient reciter of the Qur'ān. He accompanied

them to Madinah, preached Islam to the people, and led them in prayer.

The next year, Mus'āb bin Umayr (may God be pleased with him) returned to Makkah with seventy-three men and two women from Madinah. They all met with the Prophet, pledged their allegiance to him and promised to protect him and the other Muslims. This is known as the Second Pledge of Aqabah.

The Prophet's Migration

After the second pledge of Aqabah, the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) ordered the Muslims who were with him in Makkah to leave for Madinah. He could no longer tolerate their suffering at the hands of the Quraysh.

The emigration from Makkah to Madinah was not easy. The Quraysh put many obstacles to prevent the Muslims from leaving Makkah. Some were forced to leave their wives and children behind, and to travel alone. Others had to leave all of their wealth and belongings and travel empty handed.

On the 27th of Safar in the 14th year of Prophethood (September 622 C.E.), God granted permission to the Prophet to travel to Madinah. Abu Bakr, the Prophet's close friend, accompanied him on this blessed and historical journey.

On the eve of that day, the Quraysh had gathered to make one final attempt to assassinate the Prophet. They agreed that each tribe would provide a young man and together they would attack the Prophet, each man striking a blow. God informed His Messenger of this plot, and so he (blessings and peace be upon him) secretly left the house without the men of Quraysh noticing him.

Over the years, the Messenger of God had acquired such a reputation for honesty that the disbelieving Quraysh would leave their valuables with him to look after. Before leaving, the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) charged Ali with the responsibility of returning all the properties to their rightful owners.

A New Beginning

The Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) arrived in Madinah on Friday, the 12th of

Rabi' al-Awwal 1 A.H. (September 27th, 622 C.E.) and took the downstairs of Abu Ayyub's dwelling as a temporary residence.

The Muslims were overjoyed at the arrival of the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him). It was the best thing that had ever happened to them. Young children were singing beautiful songs, welcoming the Prophet to their city.

From that day on, the town of Yathreb was known as *Madinat an-Nabi*, or the City of the Prophet.

The Prophet's journey from Makkah to Madinah – *the Hijrah* – was seen as a new beginning and a fresh opportunity to spread the message of Islam. The importance of this date was further amplified when the early Muslims decided to begin their calendar from the first year of the *Hijrah*.

Soon after his arrival, the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) helped in the building of a mosque, now known as *al-Masjed an-Nabawi*. The mosque was a meeting place for the faithful and a centre for all of their activities. After the mosque was built, the Messenger of God chose

Bilal bin Rabah, known for his beautiful voice, to call the people to prayer.

The First Constitution

In Madinah, the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) became the Head of State. He established brotherhood between the emigrants (*Muhājerīn*) from Makkah and the Helpers (*Ansār*) of Madinah. The *Ansār* were so pleased to form a brotherhood that they were willing to divide all their possessions and give half to their *Muhājer* brothers.

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) also made an agreement with the Jews, confirming their freedom to practice their faith and to live in peace. This accord is considered the first Constitution and Charter of Human Rights and Liberties. It guaranteed freedom, security and justice to every citizen.

During this period the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) put great emphasis on education. Men, women and children were taught all different aspects of faith and worship. He also stressed the importance of ethics and good manners, since he realised that a great city is not built by strong walls but rather by outstanding people. Thus, within a

few years Madinah became the most honourable society ever known in human history.

The Battle of Badr

Even after the Muslims left Makkah, the Quraysh continued their hostility and waited for any opportunity to crush the young and fragile Muslim community. The Muslims realised that they could no longer allow aggression without any resistance. If they did not defend themselves, they would ultimately all be annihilated. The Prophet, who had practiced strict pacifism in Makkah for thirteen years and disliked the use of coercive force, was now given permission by God to defend against any attacks by his enemies.

The Qur'an declared: "Fighting has been prescribed for you and you detest it, but perhaps you detest something and in it is much good. And perhaps you love something and in it is much harm, and God knows and you do not know." [Qur'an 2:216].

In the month of Ramadān, the 2nd year after the *Hijrah*, the Muslims fought the Quraysh of Makkah in a historical battle at *Badr*. The Muslims were only

313 in number, whilst the Quraysh army numbered more than a thousand and were fully equipped.

With the help of God, the Muslims were victorious in the battle. During the battle, some of the Quraysh men were taken as prisoners and later released. For the first time in history, prisoners of war were fed, looked after and treated humanely.

Among the captives were those who had nothing with which to ransom themselves. The Messenger of God allowed them to earn their freedom by teaching children to read and write.

During the following years, the Quraysh made several other failed attempts to destroy the new Muslims state, but the Muslims held strong and defended themselves with great courage and valour.

The Treaty of Hudaybeyah

In Dhul-Qa‘dah, the sixth year after *Hijrah*, the Muslims left for Makkah with the intention of making the lesser pilgrimage (*Umrah*). The Muslims had come clad in white as pilgrims signifying that

they had come in peace. Yet, the Quraysh arrogantly refused the Muslims entry into Makkah.

It was on this occasion that the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) made a truce with the Quraysh at a place called *al-Hudaybeyah*, approximately 7 miles from Makkah. The treaty stated that the Muslims would not be allowed to perform *Umrah* this year but permission would be given for the following year. The two parties also agreed to abandon war and to live in peace for ten years. Even though the terms of the treaty were heavily on the side of the Quraysh, this was to be another triumph for Islam.

Beyond Arabia

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) took advantage of this period of peace with the Quraysh and sent letters to various rulers, including the emperors of the two super-powers of the time, Persia and Byzantium, inviting them to Islam.

When Heraclius, the Byzantine emperor, received the letter, he sent his men to find out all they could about the Prophet. Abu Sufyan, the Qurayshi leader who was still at that time an enemy of Islam,

happened to be in Palestine on a business trip and was presented to the emperor.

Heraclius asked Abu Sufyan several questions and after listening to his answers, remarked:

"I asked you about his family and your reply was that he belonged to a very noble family. In fact, all prophets come from noble families. I questioned you whether anybody else amongst you claimed such a thing, your reply was in the negative. If the answer had been yes, I would have thought that this man was imitating someone before him. Then I asked you, whether anyone of his family was a king. Your reply was in the negative, and if it had been yes, I would have thought that this man wanted to take back his family's kingdom.

I further asked whether he was ever accused of telling lies, and your reply was in the negative. I wondered how a person who does not tell a lie about others could ever tell a lie about God. I then asked you whether the rich people followed him or the poor. You replied that it was the poor who followed him. In fact, all the prophets have been followed by this very class of people.

Then I asked you whether his followers were increasing or decreasing in number. You replied that they were increasing, and in fact, this is the way of true faith. I further asked you whether there was anyone who, after embracing his religion, became displeased and left this religion. Your reply was in the negative, and in fact, this is the sign of true faith. Then I asked you what he ordered you to do. You replied that he ordered you to worship God alone and not to worship anything along with Him, and that he ordered you to speak the truth.

If what you have said is true, he will very soon occupy this land under my feet. I knew from the scriptures that he was going to come, but I did not know that he would be from amongst you. If I could reach him, I would go immediately to meet him and if I were with him, I would certainly wash his feet.'

The Conquest of Makkah

As expected, the Quraysh violated the terms of the Hudaybeyah Treaty and supported enemies of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him). Therefore, on the morning of Friday, the 20th of Ramadān, 8 A.H. the Prophet accompanied by an army of ten thousand entered Makkah and captured the city with hardly a single drop of blood being shed. The Prophet forgave all those who had up to then been bitter enemies of Islam and declared a general amnesty.

The Prophet then went into the Ka`bah and destroyed all the idols inside it. The Ka`bah was once again restored to the purpose for which it was built by Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), as a place to worship the one true God.

Unlike other leaders who arrogantly boast of their victory with heads held high, the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was so humble before God that his chin almost touched the back of his camel. One man, trembling with awe on that day, was told by the Prophet, “Be at ease, and do not be afraid. I

am not a king. I am only the son of a Qurayshi woman who used to eat meat dried in the sun."

The victory of Makkah had a tremendous impact on the Arabs. It showed that Islam was indeed the religion of God and it paved the way for the whole of Arabia to accept the faith.

The Farewell Pilgrimage

On the 4th of Dhul-Hijj*ah*, the tenth year after *Hijrah*, the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) entered Makkah for the last time to perform *Hajj* (pilgrimage) accompanied by 144,000 Muslim men and women. The Prophet realized that his mission was coming to an end and that it was necessary to bid farewell to his loving companions.

On this occasion he gave a historic sermon in which he explained the principles of Islam. He said,

"O people, listen to my words carefully, for I know not after this year whether I shall ever meet you again at this place. O people! Your lives and your property are sacred until you meet your Lord, as are this place, this day and this month. Remember, you will indeed meet your Lord and answer for your

deeds…You have your rights over your wives and they have rights over you…Treat your women well and be kind to them, for they are your partners and committed helpers…Listen carefully, O people, and understand well. I leave behind me two things which if you follow them, you will not go astray: the Qur'an and my Sunnah (example). O people! Listen to my words. Know that every Muslim is a brother to every other Muslim and that Muslims comprise one brotherhood.

O people, your Lord is One, and your father (Adam) is one. You must know that no Arab has superiority over a non-Arab, and no non-Arab has superiority over an Arab, nor a red man over a black man, nor a black man over a red, except in terms of what each person has of piety."

The Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) then faced the heavens and said: "Witness, O God, that I have conveyed Your message to Your people."

On this occasion God revealed the following verse of the Qur'ān:

“This day I have perfected your religion for you, and have completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you as your religion al-Islam.” (Surah al-Ma'idah 5:3)

The Death of the Prophet (Blessings and Peace Be Upon Him)

The Messenger of God had now completed his work on earth and fulfilled his responsibility. The time had come for him to return to his Lord. On Monday the 12th of *Rabi al-Awwal*, at the age of 63, God the Almighty, reclaimed the soul of his beloved Messenger. The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) passed away in his home, with his family close by him. He was buried under the room in which he died in the city of Madinah.

He died on the same day he was born, in the same house he had lived in for ten years in Madinah, on a small bed made of leather stuffed with palm fibres, in the arms of his beloved wife Aishah. His dying words were, "Treat your servants well. The prayer, the prayer, don’t be neglectful of the prayer. O God, [I have chosen] the exalted companionship."

The companions were greatly saddened, not only by the loss of their beloved Prophet but also because they knew there would be no further revelation from God. Some were so shocked that they denied that the Prophet had died. It was on this occasion that Abu Bakr, the close companion of the Prophet announced, "If anyone worshipped Muhammad, then Muhammad is dead. But whoever worships God, then know that God is the Ever-Living, who will never die." He then recited the following verse of the Qur'an:

"Muhammad is not but a messenger. Many messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed would you turn back on your heels [to disbelief]?" (3:144)

When the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) passed away, the entire Arabian Peninsula had accepted Islam. He left behind a message that remains as clear and alive today as when it was first delivered.

The Prophet's Physical Description and Manner

The Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) was of medium height. His face was fair,

attractive and round. He had wavy hair, neither straight nor curly, and his hair touched his shoulders. His eyes were wide and his pupils were black. He had a thick beard with soft cheeks. His chest and shoulders were wide. His teeth were bright and sparkled when he spoke.

He walked in strides and in a humble manner. He would lift his feet and not drag them. Whenever he turned, he would turn with his entire body. He would offer greeting to others before they offered it to him.

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) liked to smile and was never cruel, even when others were rude to him. He was extremely kind and caring. He never insulted others. One who sat with the Prophet would feel that he was the most important and beloved individual to him. He was like a kind and caring father to everyone and all people were equal to him.

He was always cheerful and grateful for every blessing God gave him, no matter how small it seemed. He did not criticize any food he tasted.

He would spend his days serving the people and spend his nights worshipping his Lord.

What Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) Said about the Environment

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) recognized the importance of looking after the environment. He taught that human beings were God's agents on the earth and it is their duty to protect it. On one occasion, he said:

"The world is green and beautiful, and God has appointed you his guardian over it." (Sahih Muslim)

He encouraged believers to plant trees and regarded it a sin to destroy them without a valid reason. He said:

"There is none amongst the believers who plants a tree or sows a seed and then a bird, a person or an animal eats from it, except that it is regarded as a charity [for which he can expect God's pleasure and reward]." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

Keeping the earth green, productive and of benefit to humans and animals is a most noble concern according to Islam. We learn from the Prophet

(blessings and peace be upon him) that the sowing of plants is such a righteous action in the sight of God that it is encouraged, even if it were a person's final act on earth. The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said:

"Even when the Day of Judgment comes (upon you), if anyone has a seed in his hand, he should plant it." (Ahmad)

The Prophet considered all of God's creations to be important and he believed animals, land, trees and the rest of the environment and natural resources should have rights and be protected.

What the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) Said about the Treatment of Animals

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) taught that harming, abusing or beating animals was a sinful act and caused the displeasure of God while protecting animals, showing mercy and kindness to them were good actions, which God would reward. He said that a Muslim was responsible for the care of animals, so much so that an ill-treated animal will testify against the one who abused it on the Day of Judgment.

The Prophet forbade people to capture birds, burn anthills or beat animals. He also forbade the taking of animals as target and killing them for mere sport. He used to praise anyone who showed mercy to animals. At the same time, he would criticize anyone who used to hurt animals, tire them, or make them carry a heavy load for long periods.

The Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him) once said:

“Whilst a man was walking on a road, he became very thirsty. He found a well, climbed down it, drank his fill, and then came out. He then saw a dog panting hard and eating the damp earth. So he said: ‘This dog is thirsty, like I was.’ So he again went down into the well and filled his leather sock with water. Holding his sock in his mouth, he came out of the well and then gave the water to the dog. Therefore, God appreciated the man and forgave him his sins.” The Companions asked: ‘O Messenger of God! Do we get reward for being kind even to animals?’ The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) replied: ‘There is reward for showing kindness to every living thing.’” (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

Once the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) passed by some children who were shooting arrows at a ram, he rebuked them, saying:

“Do not wound the poor animal.” (Sunan an-Nasā’i)

He also once ordered a man who had taken the chicks of a bird from their nest to return them from where he got them, since it would cause distress to their mother who was trying to protect them. (Sahih Muslim)

What the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) Said about Relationships with Non-Muslims

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was a mercy for all humanity. God described him as such in the Qur'an, saying:

"And We did not send you [O Muhammad] but as a mercy to the worlds." (21:107)

And the Prophet himself said, "Indeed, I was sent as a mercy." (Muslim)

His mercy was a general mercy; which included everyone, the non-believer as well as the believer. When Tufayl bin `Amr ad-Dausiy gave up hope on the guidance of his tribe he went to the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) and said,

"O Messenger of God, the tribe of Daus has disobeyed and refused, so supplicate to God against them." The Prophet faced Makkah and raised his hands, and the people were certain that Daus would be destroyed. But the Prophet of Mercy only said, "O God, guide Daus and bring them [to Islam]." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

He supplicated for their guidance and not for their punishment or destruction because he only wished good for people and hoped for their success and salvation.

When the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) went to Ta'if to invite its people to Islam they met him with denial and ridicule and encouraged street boys to throw stones at him until his feet bled. Even under such circumstances, when angels sought his permission to destroy the town, the Prophet refused.

This was the mercy which enabled the Prophet to forget his bleeding wounds and broken heart, only thinking of how to bring good to those people and bring them out from darkness into the light and guide them to the straight path.

And when he conquered Makkah, entering it with ten thousand soldiers, God gave him the decision concerning those who had abused and persecuted him, plotted his assassination, expelled him from his homeland, killed his companions and tortured them because of their religion. One of his companions said, "Today is a day of massacre." But the Prophet

(blessings and peace be upon him) said, "No, but today is a day of mercy."

Then he went before the defeated people whose eyes were wide with fear and whose hearts were trembling, waiting to see what the victorious conqueror would do with them. Their own practice was that of revenge and murder. But the Prophet said to them, "O Quraysh, what do you suppose I should do with you?" They replied, "What is good. You are a generous brother and the son of a generous brother." The Messenger of God replied, "Go, for you are free."

Such an all-inclusive pardon was due to mercy in the Prophet's heart. It was so great that it included those enemies who had harmed him and his companions most. How true were the words of the Prophet when he said, "I am but a bestowed mercy." (Al-Hakim)

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The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) and the Appreciation of Women

Fourteen centuries ago, the Messenger of God declared through divine revelation that women were equal in humanity and faith with men. God stated in the Qur'an:

"Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember God often and the women who do so – for them God has prepared forgiveness and a great reward". (33:35)

And the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said, "Women are but sisters of men." (Ahmad, Abu Dawud and at-Termidhi)

The Messenger of God confronted many cruel and unjust practices against women during his time. Some of the Arabs, considering women inferior,

would bury their daughters alive but the Prophet spoke out against such evil customs.

The Qur'an describes it thus:

And when one of them is informed of [the birth of] a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide. (16:58-59)

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) used to encourage kindness to women and girls. He said,

“Whoever supports two daughters until they reach the age of puberty, he will come on the Day of Resurrection with me [like this], and he joined his fingers.” (Muslim)

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) emphasized kindness to mothers. Once a man came to him asking, "O Messenger of God, who is most entitled to my good companionship?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man said, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man asked again, "Who is next?" The Prophet once again

repeated, "Your mother." The man asked for the fourth time, "Who is next?" The Prophet then said, "Your father."

The Messenger of God used to consult women, deal with them gently, support them in all situations and give them their complete rights in a way never dreamt of before. He was also concerned with educating women. He even appointed a day for them to assemble and would come to teach them from that which God had taught him. (Muslim)

He did not make women prisoners within the house, but allowed them to go out to take care of their needs, visit their relatives and the sick. He allowed them to buy and sell in the marketplace as long as they adhered to modest conduct and proper dress. He also allowed them to attend the mosque and forbade preventing them, saying, "Do not prevent your women from [coming to] the mosques." (Ahmad and Abu Dawud)

He prohibited beating women and said, "Do not strike the female servants of God." (Abu Dawud) And he urged kindness toward them with the words, *"Be advised to be good to women."* (Al-

Bukhari and Muslim) This means good treatment, respect for her rights, concern for her feelings and avoidance of any kind of harm. And he told his companions, "The best of you is the best of you to your wives." (Ahmad and at-Termidhi)

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The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) and his Love for Children

Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) is a role model for the whole of humankind. His attitude towards children was always compassionate and merciful. Being fond of children, the Prophet was often seen playing with them. Anas bin Malek, a companion of the Prophet, reported:

"I never saw anyone who was more compassionate towards children than the Messenger of God (blessings and peace be upon him). His son, Ibrahim, was in the care of a wet nurse in the hills around Madinah. He would go there, and we would go with him. He would enter the house, pick up his son and kiss him, and then come back." (Muslim)

The Prophet’s love for children was not restricted to his own children and grandchildren. The scope of his mercy and affection embraced all children, and he showed the same interest and gentleness to his companions' children.

Some people who were not able to understand the power of expressing love to children wondered why

God's Messenger played with children and took such an interest in them. A Bedouin came to the Prophet and said, "You [people] kiss children! We don't kiss them." The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said, "I cannot put mercy in your heart if God has removed it." (Al-Bukhari)

On another occasion he responded: "He who does not show mercy will not receive mercy." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was always concerned about everyone’s thoughts and feelings. For example, the young brother of Anas bin Malek used to play with a small bird and it died. The boy was sad, so the Prophet of Mercy went to visit him, console him and cheer him up. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)

And the Prophet used to frequently visit the Ansar and he would greet their children and pat their heads. (An-Nasā’i) He used to go to the small children and bless them and chew dates for them. (Muslim) He also used to carry [his granddaughter] Umamah bint Zaynab while praying. When he

prostrated he would put her down and when he stood up he would carry her.

May the blessings and peace of God be upon the noble and merciful Prophet Muhammad!

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What Non-Muslim Scholars Have Said about Prophet Muhammad

Throughout history, many non-Muslim thinkers and intellectuals were fascinated by the personality of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) and highly praised his principles and achievements. Below are a few of these sayings:

Alphonse de Lamartine in 'Histoire de la Turquie', Pans 1854, vol. 11, pp. 276-77.

"Never has a man undertaken a work so far beyond human power with so feeble means, for he (Muhammad) had, in the conception as well as in the execution of such a great design, no other instrument than himself and no other aid except a handful of men living in a corner of the desert. Finally, never has a man accomplished such a huge and lasting revolution in the world, because in less than two centuries after its appearance, Islam, in faith and in arms, reigned over the whole of Arabia, and conquered, in God's name, Persia Khorasan, Transoxania, Western India, Syria, Egypt, Abyssinia, all the known continent of Northern Africa,

numerous islands of the Mediterranean Sea, Spain, and part of Gaul.

"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astonishing results are the three criteria of a human genius, who could dare compare any great man in history with Muhammad? The most famous men created arms, laws, and empires only. They founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples, dynasties, but millions of men in one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and the souls.”

"Philosopher, Orator, Apostle, Legislator, Conqueror of Ideas, Restorer of Rational beliefs.... The founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?"

Sir George Bernard Shaw in 'The Genuine Islam,' vol. 1, no. 8, 1936.

"If any religion had the chance of ruling over England, nay Europe within the next hundred years, it could be Islam."

“I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion, which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence, which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Saviour of Humanity."

"I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.”

Michael Hart in 'The 100, A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History,' New York, 1978.

“My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world’s most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the secular and religious level. ...It is probable that the relative influence of Muhammad on Islam has been larger than the combined influence of Jesus Christ and St. Paul on Christianity. ...It is this unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence, which I feel, entitles Muhammad to be considered the most influential single figure in human history.”

The great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi said:

"After I finished the second part of the Biography of Muhammad, I felt I needed to know more about this great personality. He uncontested, won the hearts of millions of people."

Thomas Carlyle, the English writer, said:

"I like Muhammad for his hypocrisy-free nature…with clear and sound words he addresses

the Roman Tsars and Kings of Persia. He guided them to what he loves for them in this life and in the eternal life."

He further writes in 'Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History,' 1840.

"The lies (Western slander) which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man (Muhammad) are disgraceful to ourselves only."

"A silent great soul, one of that who cannot but be earnest. He was to kindle the world, the world's Maker had ordered so."

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ocklay write in History of the Saracen Empire, London 1870, p 54.

"It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder; the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Madina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran...The

Mahometans[2] have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. I believe in One God and Mahomet is the Apostle of God' is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honors of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion."

Gibbon in 'The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire' 1823

"The good sense of Muhammad despised the pomp of royalty. The Apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family; he kindled the fire; swept the floor; milked the ewes; and mended with his own hands his shoes and garments. Disdaining the penance and merit of a hermit, he observed

(2) The term Mahometans or Muhammadanism is offensive to Muslims who believe that Allah, not Muhammad, founded the religion.

without effort of vanity the abstemious diet of an Arab."

Annie Besant writes in "The Life and Teachings of Muhammad," Madras 1932, p 4

"It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which may be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that mighty Arabian teacher."

W. Montgomery Watt writes in Mohammad at Mecca, Oxford, 1953, p 52

“His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement all argue his fundamental integrity To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.”

Bosworth Smith writes in Mohammad and Mohammadanism, London 1874, p 92.

“He was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope's pretensions, Caesar without the legions of Caesar: without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a palace, without fixed revenue. If ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammad, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports. He cared not for the dressings of power. The simplicity of his private life was in keeping with his public life."

"In Mohammadanism everything is different here. Instead of the shadowy and the mysterious, we have history....We know of the external history of Muhammad....while for his internal history after his mission had been proclaimed, we have a book absolutely unique in its origin, in its preservation....on the Substantial authority of which no one has ever been able to cast a serious doubt."

James A. Michene ~ Islam: The Misunderstood Religion, Reader's Digest (American ed.) May 1955, pp. 68-70.

Muhammad, the inspired man who founded Islam, was born about 570 AD. into an Arabian tribe that worshipped idols. Orphaned at birth, he was always particularly solicitous of the poor and needy the widow and the orphan, the slave and the downtrodden.

At twenty he was already a successful businessman, and soon became director of camel caravans for a wealthy widow. When he reached twenty-five, his employer recognizing his meet, proposed marriage. Even though she was fifteen years older, he married her, and as long as she lived remained a devoted husband.

Like almost every major prophet before him, Muhammad fought shy of serving as the transmitter of God's word, sensing his own inadequacy but the angel commanded Read'. So far as we know, Muhammad was unable to read or write, but he began to dictate those inspired words which would

soon revolutionize a large segment of the earth: "There is one God."

In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred, and rumours of God's personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced, "An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human being."

At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: 'If there are any among you who worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives forever."

The German Poet, Wolfgang Goethe said:

"I looked into history for a human paradigm and found it to be in Muhammad."

Lane-Poole in 'Speeches and Table Talk of the Prophet Muhammad'

“He was the most faithful protector of those he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation. Those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence; those who came near him loved him; they who described him would say, "I have never seen his like either before or after." He was of great taciturnity, but when he spoke it was with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could forget what he said...”

W.C. Taylor in 'The History of Muhammadanism and its Sects'

“So great was his liberality to the poor that he often left his household unprovided, nor did he content himself with relieving their wants, he entered into conversation with them, and expressed a warm sympathy for their sufferings. He was a firm friend and a faithful ally.”

Dr. Gustav Weil in 'History of the Islamic Peoples'

“Muhammad was a shining example to his people. His character was pure and stainless. His house, his

dress, his food - they were characterized by a rare simplicity. So unpretentious was he that he would receive from his companions no special mark of reverence, nor would he accept any service from his slave which he could do for himself. He was accessible to all and at all times. He visited the sick and was full of sympathy for all. Unlimited was his benevolence and generosity as also was his anxious care for the welfare of the community."

Washington Irving in 'Life of Muhammad,' New York, 1920.

"His military triumphs awakened no pride nor vain glory as they would have done had they been effected by selfish purposes. In the time of his greatest power he maintained the same simplicity of manner and appearance as in the days of his adversity. So far from affecting regal state, he was displeased if, on entering a room, any unusual testimonial of respect was shown to him."

Arthur Glyn Leonard in 'Islam, Her Moral and Spiritual Values'

"It was the genius of Muhammad, the spirit that he breathed into the Arabs through the soul of Islam

that exalted them. That raised them out of the lethargy and low level of tribal stagnation up to the high watermark of national unity and empire. It was in the sublimity of Muhammad's deism, the simplicity, the sobriety and purity it inculcated the fidelity of its founder to his own tenets, that acted on their moral and intellectual fiber with all the magnetism of true inspiration."

Jules Masserman in 'Who Were History's Great Leaders?' in TIME Magazine, July 15, 1974

"Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was Mohammad, who combined all the three functions. To a lesser degree Moses did the same."

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